

NORTHWEST FOREST PLAN - SURVEY AND MANAGE
IDENTIFICATION OF NON-HIGH PRIORITY RED TREE VOLE SITES
FACT SHEET
April 22, 2003

BACKGROUND

- The red tree vole is a small mammal that resembles a mouse.
- The red tree vole is one of approximately 300 rare or little-known species for which Northwest Forest Plan Survey and Manage mitigation measures apply.
- In some areas of its range, pre-project surveys for the red-tree vole are required for any projects that are determined to be habitat disturbing. In other parts of its range, pre-project surveys are not required.
- Known red tree vole sites with active nests require the establishment of a “Habitat Area”. Habitat Areas are at a minimum 10 acres in size, and expand in size based on the number of active nests and the spacing of those nests. Habitat Areas vary in size and can be up to 100 acres.
- Within Habitat Areas, recommended management activities are limited. While fuels reduction treatments may occur (pre-commercial thinning, brush removal, underburning, etc.) commercial thinning and timber harvest is generally prohibited.

MANAGEMENT OF KNOWN SITES UNDER THE JANUARY 2001 ROD

- One of the requirements in the Survey and Manage program is to manage known sites for the benefit of the species.
- The January 2001 ROD allows the agencies to release known sites for other management that are not needed to provide for a “reasonable assurance of persistence” of Survey and Manage species.
- The above is accomplished through a four-step process, and such sites (not needed to provide for persistence) are identified on a project-by-project basis.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROGRAMMATIC PROCESS FOR IDENTIFICATION OF NON-HIGH RED TREE VOLE SITES

- The High Priority Site planning team for the red tree vole (RTV) developed a process that programmatically identifies sites as non-high priority.
- The programmatic process applies to a “pilot” area in the central part of the RTV range where they are generally found to be more abundant. The pilot area covers approximately 1/3 of the approximate 2,500 known RTV sites.
- The process provides four watershed and survey area characteristics that field units are to address when assessing a RTV site within a project area:
 - The amount of capable forest reserve land¹ in 5th field watersheds (watersheds that are between 8-60,000 acres in size);
 - The quality of habitat a known RTV site occurs within;
 - The number of active RTV nests within a survey area; and
 - The total survey effort for an area.
- The process has been “field tested” as each unit within the pilot area has completed an initial analysis of sites that could be released.

¹ Reserved forested stands either currently providing or capable of growing into RTV habitat. Reserved lands are defined in the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan, and include Congressionally reserved lands such as wilderness and national parks, Late-Successional Reserves, Riparian Reserves, and administratively withdrawn areas.

- Up to approximately 40 percent of the known sites within the pilot area could be identified as non-high priority.
- The programmatic process will save field units' time in analysis, documentation, and coordination with adjacent units, and provides a bigger picture approach to the case-by-case identification process.

WHAT'S NEXT

- On a project specific basis, field units can begin to complete their review and analyze the criteria outlined in the programmatic process. Field units will identify actual sites to be identified as non-high priority, enter them into the Interagency Species Management System (ISMS database), and turn in the information to the Survey and Manage Program Manager.
- Actual release of the non-priority sites will occur through NEPA documentation.